

**MEMORANDUM
CITY OF LANCASTER, CA**

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Vice Mayor Marvin Crist
Council Member Sandra Johnson

DATE: June 25, 2013

SUBJECT: **Report on the Activities of the Board of Directors for the Antelope Valley Transit Authority**

Recommendation:

Receive a report of the proceedings and issues discussed at the May 2013 regular Board of Directors meetings of the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA).

Background:

The Antelope Valley Transit Authority is a distinct government entity created under a joint powers authority agreement between the City of Lancaster, the City of Palmdale, and Los Angeles County that provides public transit services. Vice Mayor Marvin Crist and Council Member Sandra Johnson serve on the AVTA Board for the City of Lancaster.

The following significant events took place at the May Board meeting:

- **Attendance.** Los Angeles County and Lancaster Board members were present. Director Tom Lackey and Director Steve Hofbauer representing Palmdale were both absent.
- **Special Report.**
 - The Board received a report from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority regarding the Metrolink coordination and mutual interests. The MTA Board will be considering a fare increase of up to 7% effective July 1, 2013. However, staff will be recommending the weekend pass remain at \$10 for Saturday and Sunday only. The recent survey of services by MTA stated there were fewer comments concerning safety and security than the previous survey. The AVTA Board wanted to know how many people participated in the survey and how often they coordinated with the cities regarding issues around the Metrolink stations. According to the representative, the Director of Security has coordinated with the cities, but he is not sure how often this occurs. He will report back on this as well as the number of survey participants.

- Staff presented a federal and state legislative update to the Board including the recently published federal regulation showing a substantial decrease in 5307 funding for AVTA. Instead of the \$9 million that was forecasted, AVTA will be receiving approximately \$7.6 million. Additionally, the 5337 funding is expected to decrease, primarily due to the new definitions and formulas being used by the Federal government to determine distribution amounts. Metro is expected to receive a total of \$5.8 million; however the allocation amount for AVTA is undetermined. Furthermore, AVTA will receive approximately \$480,000 in 5339 funding, which will help offset the reductions in the other funding sources. These changes will result in fewer funds for operating expenses.
- Staff reported there was an increase in complaints from customers during the period between March 25th and March 31st. Most of these complaints were directly related to the service changes that were implemented March 1st. Staff indicated it is common to experience increased complaints after a service change is made, but expect this will diminish as customers get comfortable with the changes. For future reports, the Board requested the complaints to be categorized to show the number of complaints by type of complaint.
- The Board received a report on bus driver performance which indicated only 3 of 46 operators received perfect ride checks. The most common issue was the operators were not consistent in making announcements. The Board expressed concern about the results and questioned how staff and Veolia are addressing the issues. Veolia management indicated they address the issues at their safety meetings. They intend to recognize the operators with perfect checks which will also help to encourage the others to improve. AVTA staff and Veolia management will continue to work to improve the operators' performance.

- **Contracts.**

- The Board approved an amendment to the Veolia contract adding two full-time call-takers to assist AVTA's Customer Service Department. A recent analysis of the call volume and response over the last 12 months indicated a deficiency in customer service staffing as nearly 45% of the incoming calls were unsuccessful in reaching an AVTA customer service representative. The calls either were answered by voicemail, a Veolia dispatcher or were abandoned as customers hung up due to long wait times indicating the need for additional staff. The cost will not exceed \$90,000 annually and the staff is being hired through the Veolia contract in order to save \$10,000 in benefits as compared to hiring them as AVTA employees.
- The Board awarded a contract to R.C. Becker & Son, Inc. in Santa Clarita for Bus Stop Improvements in the City of Palmdale in the amount of \$276,863. Continuing the efforts to support local businesses, Vice Chair Crist indicated he contacted a local company to find out why they had not submitted for the bid and was told the company did not have the capacity to take on this project right now.

- The Board authorized the Executive Director to enter into a service upgrade agreement with Southern California Edison in the amount of \$94,136 with a ten percent contingency of \$9,414 for a total of \$103,550 to replace the existing facility transformer to accommodate the new solar structure.

- **Internal Procedures.**

- The Board approved an amendment to the AVTA Advertising Policy procurement guidelines adjusting modifying the language restricting libelous material and adding a more specific language regarding advertising content related to businesses and public agencies (not just transit).
- The Board voted to remove the item creating a Finance and Governance Committee and opted to utilize the Executive Committee that is already established through the JPA agreement instead.

- **Closed Session.**

- The Board was updated by Legal Counsel regarding existing litigation (California Government Code Section 54956.9(d)). Case: People v. Jorge; Case no. BA405021. There was no reportable action.
- Counsel announced there was no reportable action on the public employee performance evaluation of the Executive Director (California Government Code Section 54957(b)).